Pictou's Flying Ace

Nine days after the outbreak of WWII, George Urquhart Hill, walked into the recruitment office in Halifax and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force at the age of 21.

Originally from Antigonish, but studied at the top of his class at Pictou Academy and then later at Mount Allison University, he graduated as a pilot in the RCAF in 1940 and became a flying instructor.

Recollections from people in Pictou at that time remember the "buzzing" of his grandmother's home in Pictou – when he flew his aircraft at chimney-top level. Students in Wallace also remember when he would fly over the school where his mother, Anne Hill was principal. He would adjust he pitch of the propellers to make a loud vibrating noise so that the people on the ground could feel the vibration and the windows of the school shook.

Shortly thereafter his time teaching flying to new RCAF pilots, he was transferred to active duty overseas. George claimed his first aerial victory at the Battle of Dieppe in 1942. He soon was awarded 3 Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) Awards. A rare distinction of being the first to collect three, and one of only four.

On his last operational flight in April 1944, he was taken as a prisoner of war until the end of the war on September 2, 1945.

A hero at home – people of Pictou celebrated the success of their home town Flying Ace. Upon his visits home during the war, he was greeted with a Guard of Honor, speeches, presentations, and even a day off school. The Town of Pictou presented him with an engraved wristwatch.

In 1950, he graduated from Dalhousie Medical School and practiced medicine in Orangeville, Ontario for almost 20 years until he was killed in a car accident turning into his own driveway after working all day at the age of 51.